

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.

State Route 1019 and 1020

Tamaqua, PA 18252

Congressional District 6

EPA ID #: PAD069778967

Last Updated 6/30/2005

Current Progress at the Site

The most recent Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report shows a decrease in chlorinated compound concentrations beneath the site from the previous sampling event as well as an overall decrease since initiating monitoring approximately 13 years ago. Based upon the groundwater sampling, the plume is contracting, the source mass is reducing, and the migrating concentrations appear to be being attenuated. The wells in the critical area, in the pond and groundwater nearest the downgradient property boundary, meet the MCL's and pose no public health risk.

Site Description

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. is located in Hometown, Schuylkill County, PA and consists of 175 contiguous acres of which 60 are the industrial site and the rest are leased fields, wooded, or a wildlife refuge. Since 1972, APCI has manufactured fluorine gas and fluorine compounds as well as conducted transfilling, purification, and distribution of speciality gasses.

In November, 1992 PADEP issued a RCRA operating permit to APCI. EPA issued a permit for Corrective Action in December 1997.

APCI discovered that tetrachloroethane (PCE) tanks and a cooling unit containing PCE had leaked and, in 1994, removed contaminated soil. They also discovered that some of the PCE had entered the groundwater. Most of the rest of the soil and groundwater contamination at the site does not have an identifiable source and is most likely due to inadequate care when using solvents.

Groundwater flow in this area is primarily through fractured bedrock into east-west channels. The solvents form plumes in the groundwater that are stretched in the east-west direction following these fractures in the bedrock. Because the contamination is in fractured bedrock it is very difficult to remove. The Corrective Action Permit allowed APCI to sample the groundwater for 2 years to show whether or not the contaminants in the groundwater are naturally degrading.

Between January 1998 and January 2000, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (APCI) conducted 8

quarters of groundwater sampling to determine if the groundwater contamination is decomposing due to natural attenuation. APCI submitted a final report during 2000. EPA worked with APCI to determine if the solvents in the groundwater are naturally attenuating, to modify the existing sampling plan and, to determine which further steps are necessary. Based on discussions with EPA during a Fall, 2002 meeting, APCI submitted a proposed revised monitoring plan in Spring, 2003.

EPA approved the revised monitoring plan on October 22, 2003 which is a revision to the RCRA Corrective Action Permit. This modification reduced the groundwater sampling from the semi-annual schedule to a once-per five quarter schedule. EPA determined that this reduction was warranted based on the declining levels of constituents of concern. There was no change to the required monitoring parameters.

Within one mile of APCI are drinking water wells in the fractured bedrock. No contamination from APCI has been found in these wells.

Site Responsibility

RCRA Corrective Action activities at APCI were conducted by EPA.

Contaminants

Air Products removed contaminated soils in 1994. The surface water in Neiferts Creek is not contaminated. Air Products monitored the groundwater for chloroethane (CE), tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA), and cis-1,2-dichloroethene (cis-1,2-DCE).

Community Interaction

APCI conducts monthly Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meetings. If there is further action, EPA or APCI will inform the public immediately or at one of the CAP meetings.

Institutional Controls

There are currently no institutional controls established at this facility.

Government Contact

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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm